JSR $F266

A few weeks back in the A Story A Week series, I talked about our fat book of press clippings, and the fact that so many of the stories written about my work end up having the same content. In a kind of interesting coincidence, one of the ladies here working as a printer trainee was cleaning out one of the file cabinet drawers to try and help with our paperwork organization, and she ran across a copy of an old magazine, one from about thirty years ago. It was in English, and as she wasn't sure just what it was, she checked with me to find out whether or not it could be safely tossed out.

My reply was immediate, and emphatic, "No! Absolutely not!" And then, "Where did you find this? I thought it had been lost years ago!"

She explained what she had been doing, and I then took the magazine from her and sat down at my desk to have a look inside. It only took me a minute to find 'my' story, and I settled down to read it. I should mention right away that this wasn't an article *about* me, but rather an article that I had submitted to the editors, and which they had published. I was an author!

Do you want to read some of my deathless prose? Here's a short sample:

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., 03CA A9 13    LDA #$13
., 03CC 20 66 F2 JSR $F266
., 03CF A9 11    LDA #$11
., 03D1 AE EC 03 LDX $03EC
., 03D4 CA       DEX
., 03D5 F0 06    BEQ $03DD
., 03D7 20 66 F2 JSR $F266
...
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Perhaps that's enough. If you are a person who can actually understand this language, then you will see that I have stopped at a 'cliff hanger', where the thread of the story jumps to another location. But I rather suspect that most of the A Story A Week readers will not really understand much of this plot!

And to tell the truth, neither do I, not after 30 years!

It is, of course, computer machine language. At the time I was intensely interested in computers, although such a thing as the 'PC' did not yet exist. I spent quite a bit of money renting 'time' on a large computer (the sort of thing that lived in its own room, attended by people in white coats), and when the earliest small-scale ones came on the market, invested in one for use in the music business where I was working. It turned out to be one of the most important decisions we ever made, as it greatly increased our efficiency and profitability, but that was only possible because our computer staff had an excellent knowledge of the particular needs of our business. (I was the general manager. I was the computer staff.)

But I was very interested in this machine over and above the application in our business. I was convinced that small computers like this would be useful in almost every part of our society, so I spent the evenings

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studying and learning what I could about them. I became pretty knowledgeable, and one day decided to try writing some articles for one of the many magazines devoted to the field.

The articles I wrote - a number of which were indeed published - have absolutely no application or interest now, and at this point are no more than slight historical curiosities (the program fragment above, for example, is from a story that explained how to position text in the desired location on a computer monitor back in the days before we had 'windows' on our screens). But if I ever have to put together a resumé for any reason, I'll have no hesitation about including these on it. They may be totally obsolete, but they remind me of one of the more interesting byways I travelled, so many years ago!

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